CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DWR Drops State Water Project Allocation to Zero, Seeks to Preserve Remaining Supplies

Severe Drought Leads to Worst-Ever Water Supply Outlook

SACRAMENTO – To protect Californians' health and safety from more severe water shortages in the months ahead, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) today took actions to conserve the state's precious resources. As a result, everyone – farmers, fish, and people in our cities and towns – will get less water. DWR's actions are in direct response to Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s drought State of Emergency. In the declaration, the Governor directed DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to act to modify requirements that hinder conservation of currently stored water and allow flexibility within the state's water system to maintain operations and meet environmental needs.

"The harsh weather leaves us little choice," said DWR Director Mark Cowin. "If we are to have any hope of coping with continued dry weather and balancing multiple needs, we must act now to preserve what water remains in our reservoirs."

Except for a small amount of carryover water from 2013, customers of the State Water Project (SWP) will get no deliveries in 2014 if current dry conditions persist and deliveries to agricultural districts with long-standing water rights in the Sacramento Valley may be cut 50 percent – the maximum permitted by contract – depending upon future snow survey results. It is important to note that almost all areas served by the SWP have other sources of water, such as groundwater, local reservoirs, and other supplies.

"It is our duty to give State Water Project customers a realistic understanding of how much water they will receive from the Project," said Director Cowin. "Simply put, there's not enough water in the system right now for customers to expect any water this season from the project."

DWR also has asked the SWRCB to adjust water permit terms that control State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project operations in order to preserve dwindling supplies in upstream reservoirs for farms, fisheries, and cities and towns as the drought continues.

While additional winter storms may provide a limited boost to reservoir storage and water deliveries, it would need to rain and snow heavily every other day from now until May to get us back to average annual rain and snowfall. Even then, California still would be in a drought, because normally wet December and January have been critically dry – and follow a record dry 2013 and a dry 2012.

This historic announcement reflects the severity of California's drought. After two previous dry years, 2014 is shaping up as the driest in state history. Storage in key reservoirs now is lower than at this time in 1977, one of the two previous driest water years on record. Yesterday's Sierra snow survey found the snowpack's statewide water content at only 12 percent of average for this time of year.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the principal SWP reservoir, is at 36 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity (55 percent of its historical average for the date). Shasta Lake north of Redding, California's and the federal Central Valley Project's (CVP) largest reservoir, is at 36 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity (54 percent of average for the date). San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-Delta reservoir for both the SWP and CVP, is at a mere 30 percent of its 2 million acre-foot capacity (39 percent of average for the date).

Key facts on water deliveries and impacts:

- Never before in the 54-year history of the State Water Project has DWR announced a zero allocation to all 29 public water agencies that buy from the SWP. These deliveries help supply water to 25 million Californians and roughly 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland.

- Deliveries to senior water rights holders in the Sacramento Valley – all agricultural irrigation districts – were last cut in 1992.

- The only previous State Water Project zero percent allocation was in 1991 for agriculture, but cities that year received 30 percent of requested allocations.

- "Carryover" water stored by local agencies and water transferred from willing sellers to buyers in critically short areas still will be delivered, as will emergency supplies for drinking, sanitation, and fire protection.

Regulatory Actions Sought

In a formal petition delivered earlier this week, DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) asked the SWRCB to adjust requirements for freshwater outflow in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in order to preserve stored water that may be needed later in the year for health and safety needs and to provide cold water upstream for protection of salmon and other species. The existing Delta water quality standards, contained in Water Rights Decision 1641, were not written with these extraordinarily dry conditions in mind. The DWR and Reclamation petition seeks adjustment to the water quality and flow requirements for February, along with a request to establish a framework to make further requests and adjustments as the drought evolves.

The petition also seeks flexibility in management of a water quality regulation that requires closure of the Cross-Channel Gates along the Sacramento River near Walnut Grove from February 1 through May 20. Under the current extremely low flow conditions, open gates can help ameliorate salty conditions in the Delta. DWR and Reclamation propose to close the gates should storm runoff boost flows or if fish monitoring indicates closure is needed to protect threatened species.

Water rights permits require the SWP, operated by DWR, and the CVP, operated by Reclamation, to ensure that outflow from the Delta meets an average of 7,100 cubic feet per second (cfs) beginning

February 1. Outflow is composed of flows from all tributaries to the Delta, some of which are directly controlled by DWR and Reclamation.

Under the petition, DWR and Reclamation project that outflows will be able to meet an average of 4,500 cfs during February, which is the level currently being achieved in January. To help meet this level of outflow, DWR and Reclamation will export from the Delta a maximum of 1,500 cfs, which will be used to serve health and safety needs.

The petitioners note that they do not believe there is an adequate water supply to meet all obligations under the SWRCB's Water Rights Decision 1641. Without adjustment, "there exists a substantial risk that by late spring 2014 and into 2015 the Projects' major reservoirs will be drafted to dead pool or near dead pool levels at which point reservoir release capacities will be substantially diminished." Dead pool level refers to the condition when water can no longer be released from a reservoir using gravity.

The petition seeks to minimize adverse impacts to the cold water stored in reservoirs for downstream fisheries and to allow for some level of salinity control later in the season. Otherwise, water project operators risk losing entirely the ability to control salinity in the Delta.

"As Governor Brown has directed, we will work closely with our state, federal and local partners to meet health and safety needs and deliver what water is available to critically dry areas," said Director Cowin. "Even though it's dry everywhere, California agencies have traditionally been willing to transfer any water they can spare to more needy areas. Today is a stark reminder that we all have to save every drop we can in our homes and places of work. Conservation is always important, but today it's an absolute necessity."

In addition to the actions announced today, Reclamation yesterday decided to preserve rescheduled water supplies that CVP farmers had banked as a hedge against dry conditions. Director Cowin praised the decision, saying: "In an increasingly complex situation, affirming the ability of water districts to preserve water supplies as a hedge against drought is good water management."

Authority for Changes

California law authorizes the SWRCB to grant temporary changes in permits when it finds an urgent need for the change and the change can be made without injury to other lawful users of water or without unreasonably affecting fish, wildlife, or other instream beneficial uses. The law requires consultation with representatives of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The change must also be found to be in the public interest.

Water Allocation History

In December, DWR estimated it would be able to deliver 5 percent of the slightly more than 4 million acre-feet of State Water Project water requested this year by the 29 public water agencies that purchase water from the project. They are located in Northern California, the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast, and Southern California.

The 5 percent projected allocation– now reduced to zero – tied with calendar year 2010 for the lowest initial allocation ever. The initial 2010 delivery estimate, made on the heels of the 2007-2009 drought, was eventually increased to 50 percent as winter storms developed.

The final SWP allocation for calendar year 2013 was 35 percent of requested water amounts. In 2012, the final allocation was 65 percent. It was 80 percent in 2011, up dramatically from an initial allocation of 25 percent. The final allocation was 50 percent in 2010, 40 percent in 2009, 35 percent in 2008, and 60 percent in 2007. The last 100 percent allocation – difficult to achieve even in wet years because of Delta pumping restrictions to protect threatened and endangered fish – was in 2006.

The federal CVP, which supplies much of the state's agricultural water, is expected to announce its initial allocation next month. It also will be dismal, especially for irrigation-dependent farms on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley.

Water-short Valley farmers are expected to fallow thousands of acres, sending negative economic ripples through communities dependent on the agricultural economy.

Farmers also will pump increasing amounts of groundwater, further depleting overtapped aquifers. Governor Brown directed DWR to monitor groundwater levels, land subsidence and land fallowing as the drought persists.

Conservation Key

"We need everyone in every part of the state to conserve water," said Governor Brown in his January 22 State of the State address.

When Governor Brown declared a drought State of Emergency earlier this month, he directed state officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages. This week, CAL FIRE announced it hired 125 additional firefighters to help address the increased fire threat due to drought conditions, the California Department of Public Health identified and offered assistance to communities at risk of severe drinking water shortages and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife restricted fishing on some waterways due to low water flows worsened by the drought. Also this week, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture also released the California Water Action Plan, which will guide state efforts to enhance water supply reliability, restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems and improve the resilience of our infrastructure.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 20 percent and the Save Our Water campaign has announced four new public service announcements that encourage residents to conserve. Last December, the Governor formed a Drought Task Force to review expected water allocations and California's preparedness for water scarcity. In May 2013, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order to direct state water officials to expedite the review and processing of voluntary transfers of water.

To learn easy, practical ways to save water, click here:

Governor Brown's Drought Emergency Declaration:

http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18368

Electronic snowpack readings are available on the Internet at:

http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/snowapp/sweq.action

Electronic reservoir readings may be found at:

http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/resapp/getResGraphsMain.action

For a broader snapshot of current and historical weather conditions, see DWR's "Water Conditions" and "Drought" pages:

Water Conditions Page

http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/

Drought Page

http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/drought/

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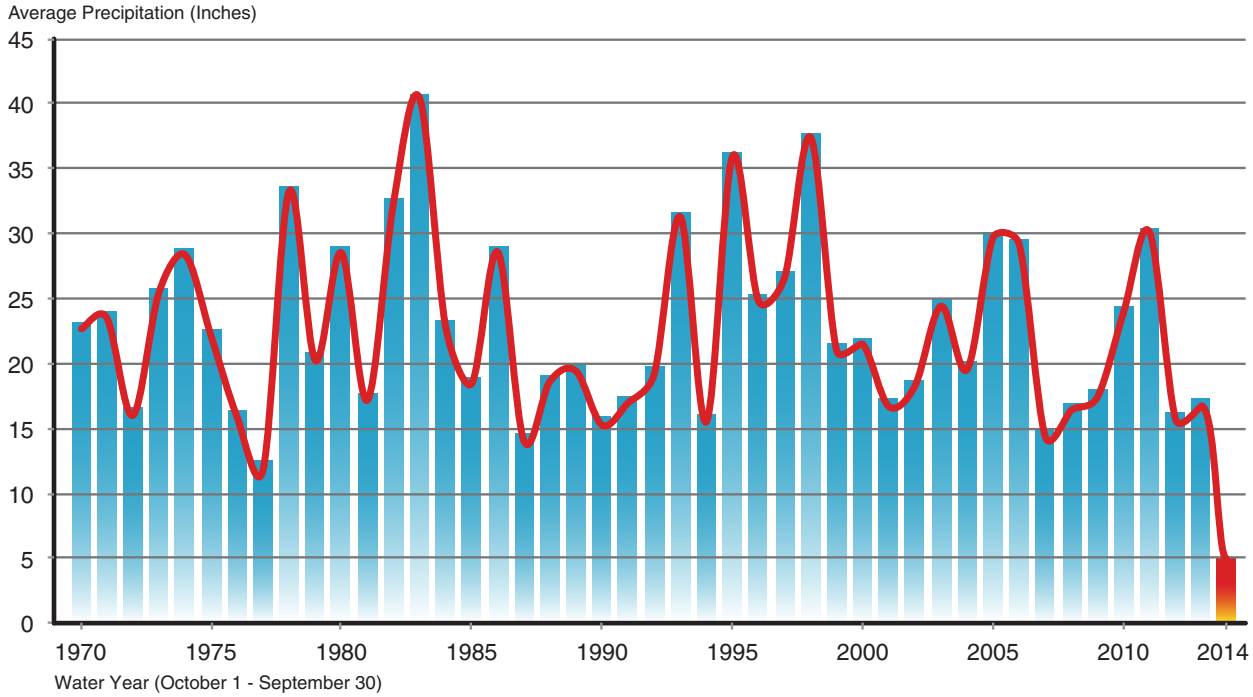
The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

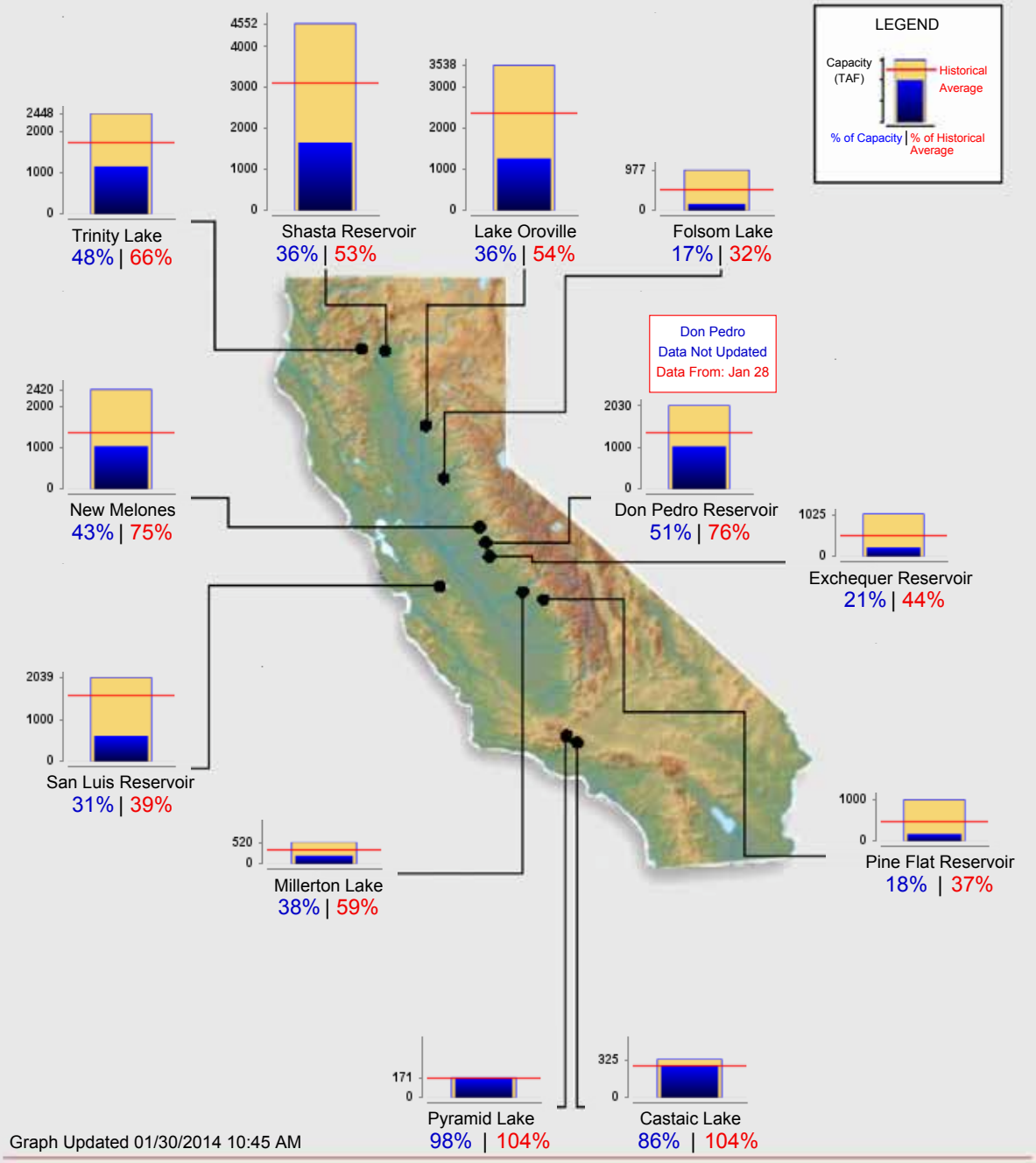
Statewide Average Precipitation - by water year



Reservoir Conditions

Ending At Midnight - January 29, 2014

CURRENT RESERVOIR CONDITIONS



State Water Project Allocations

YEAR	% ALLOCATION	
	Ag	M&I
1966		
1967		
1968	93	100
1969	100	100
1970	100	100
1971	100	100
1972	100	100
1973	100	100
1974	100	100
1975	100	100
1976	100	100
1977	40	90

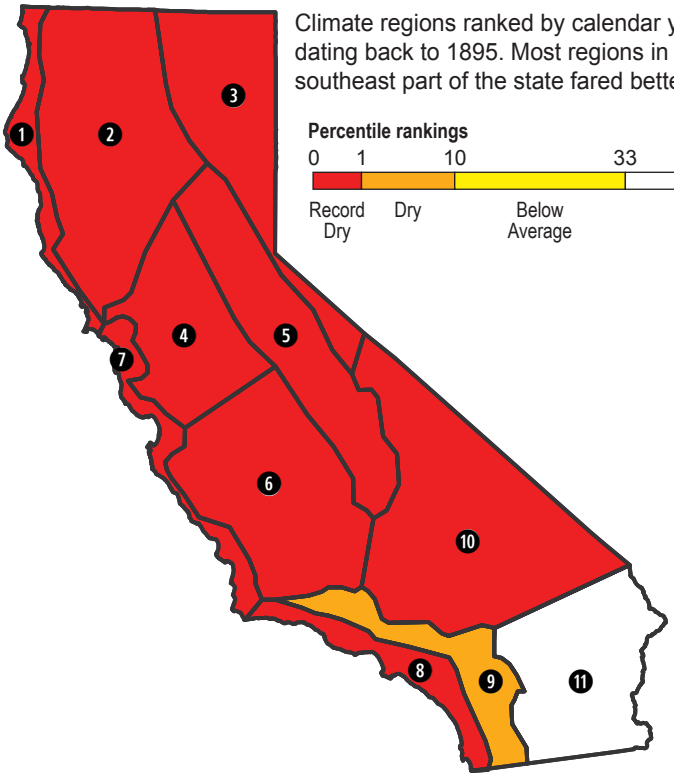
YEAR	% ALLOCATION	
	Ag	M&I
1990	50	100
1991	0	30
1992	45	45
1993	100	100
1994	50	50
1995	100	100
1996	100	100
1997	100	100
1998	100	100
1999	100	100
2000	90	90
2001	39	39

Note: Prior to 1995, allocation percentages were determined separately for agriculture (Ag) and municipal/ industrial (M&I).

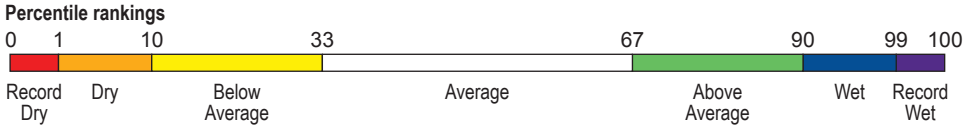
YEAR	% ALLOCATION	
	Ag	M&I
1978	100	100
1979	100	100
1980	100	100
1981	100	100
1982	100	100
1983	100	100
1984	100	100
1985	100	100
1986	100	100
1987	100	100
1988	100	100
1989	100	100

YEAR	% ALLOCATION	
	Ag	M&I
2002	70	70
2003	90	90
2004	65	65
2005	90	90
2006	100	100
2007	60	60
2008	35	35
2009	40	40
2010	50	50
2011	80	80
2012	65	65
2013	35	35

Precipitation Rankings by Climate Region: January - December 2013



Climate regions ranked by calendar year-to-date precipitation. A rank of 1 is driest on record, dating back to 1895. Most regions in California fall into this category for 2013. Only the southeast part of the state fared better, with a strong monsoon this past August/September.



Western Regional Climate Center's Climate Regions:

1. North Coast
2. North Central
3. Northeast
4. Sacramento-Delta
5. Sierra
6. San Joaquin Valley
7. Central Coast
8. South Coast
9. Southern Interior
10. Mojave Desert
11. Sonora Desert

Climate region dry years, ranked by inches of precipitation to date:

Note: records date back to 1895.

Statewide		1 North Coast		2 North Central		3 Northeast		4 Sacramento-Delta		5 Sierra	
Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall
2013	7.0	**2013**	22.7	**2013**	14.2	**2013**	7.9	**2013**	5.1	**2013**	10.4
1898	11.6	1976	32.3	1976	22.4	1924	10.6	1923	7.7	1976	17.0
1923	11.7	1923	36.5	1898	22.7	1923	11.5	1917	8.1	1898	21.6
1976	13.1	1985	37.6	1923	25.1	1976	12.0	1976	8.1	1947	21.8
1917	13.3	1929	38.9	1910	27.3	1908	12.5	1898	8.6	1908	22.1

6 San Joaquin Valley		7 Central Coast		8 South Coast		9 South Interior		10 Mojave		11 Sonoran	
Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall	Year	Rainfall
2013	2.9	**2013**	4.9	**2013**	5.3	1947	7.2	**2013**	2.7	... 66 entries to .09	
1947	4.5	1923	10.9	1947	5.5	1953	7.2	1953	2.8	1949, '55, '57	4.3
1917	5.2	1917	11.0	1989	5.6	1989	7.3	1929	2.9		
1898	5.5	1929	11.3	1898	6.0	2007	7.3	1989	2.9	2003	4.3
1929	5.7	1898	11.3	1953	6.1	1999	8.1	1947	3.1	1958	4.4
						1961	8.1			**2013**	4.4
						2013	8.2				

Source: Western Regional Climate Center